

Great Basin Prevention & Education Meeting Notes

Boise, Idaho November 12-13, 2009

Members present: Tyre Holfeltz, Loren Walker, Susan Marzec, Harry Steele, Patty Eder, Rex McKnight, Ruta Glinski, Jon Skinner (attended November 12 only).

November 12

Susan Marzec opened the meeting at 10:45.

- 1) We need to identify some new committee members.
- 2) Susan passed around a sign in sheet.
- 3) Revised our agenda; Fire Safe USA is not attending.
- 4) We need to review the directory we are using for the mailing list.

State Updates

Harry Steele provided the update for Idaho. The Idaho Prevention Team produced defensible space posters and coffee sleeves which were provided at the meeting. An op ed piece was published in the newspaper regarding homeowner complacency. They moved forward with our idea from the previous meeting (You don't have to live in the forest to be in a wildfire) to create posters. There were 2,000 posters printed. There are 15,000 coffee sleeves available for distribution. Their billboard design is available for other states to use. The Boise area was happy with the message. The range folks also liked it. Idaho Dept. of Lands, specifically Idaho Firewise owns the artwork. Contact Harry for the artwork.

What about the messages we will need regarding the new fire policy? That is really outside the scope of our committee and it is not our mission.

Harry stated Idaho provided home evaluation training using Pat Durland's material. Three sessions were held with the Idaho Falls session being the best session. About 30 people attended. The local fire departments do the home evaluations. All use the same form. It was stated that legally BLM cannot pay for mitigation teams mobilized and used during an incident. They should be paid for using pre-suppression dollars and not charged to the fire. Susan stated that in Utah, federal employees cannot do the home evaluations. Nevada is in the same boat. Idaho uses the Red Zone software. It is a two-pronged approach; the homeowner receives a copy of the home evaluation and the Red Zone template is completed with the date being provided to the local fire department.

The Idaho Wildland Fire Conference will be held in Boise October 5,6, and 7, 2010. Idaho Firewise is sponsoring it. Home assessment training will be offered on Tuesday. Students will receive a certificate upon completion of this training.

Idaho has an Americorps position open. The position will be working in CDA on the third Idaho Wildland Conference.

Idaho has a website that is serving as a clearinghouse for 30 items so far. It is a library of materials similar to the thumb drives Jon Skinner put together for distribution at last year's fire prevention conference. It is searchable by content. The social networking tools (blogs, twitter updates, etc.) are

available through the firewise website. Smurthwaite's group is also looking into the use of Twitter. The FS in Nevada has Twitter. BLM can use Twitter only by special dispensation through the WO. States do not have these limitations. Idaho paid \$25,000 to set up their website. The state of Utah had to shut down their blog because it became a political attack session. Utah formed a "toolbox" and a "cheat sheet" committee.

The Idaho Director position will be a part-time position dedicated to start a 501c3 organization. It has 2 years to make or break the Idaho Firewise group. They are working through the RCD and there is a 5% rake for indirect costs. The state of Utah cannot grant money to a RCD. The "Are we safe from fire" won a regional award! This DVD was seen at our meeting in SLC.

Nevada

Patty Eder provided the update for Nevada. She stated that she is the new FS prevention person and is starting her program on the HTF from scratch. The HTF is the largest forest in the whole US. She is trying to coordinate activities on the north and south ends of the forest. She has established a prevention line item in the budget for each district. Some of the money will be used to clean the Smokey suits and for sign replacement. There are 10 districts. Some rural areas in Nevada have been totally forgotten. She will try and get the FS more involved with Nevada Fire Safe Council annual events. She would like to see the Carson RD get more involved in some of BLM's efforts such as the Reno Rodeo and the Black Stallion Literacy program. Patty is working on the Forest Prevention Plan because they have never had one. There will be a FS presence at the Reno Rodeo. She used the southern Nevada fire prevention trailer at the Nevada Wildfire Awareness Week kick-off event. She also described her involvement with the Smokey Balloon at the balloon races. There is a vendor trailer there where Smokey products and memorabilia are sold. BLM, NDF and FS provide balloon chasers. Patty intends to focus on high school kids for education outreach. The FS is trying to work with the BLM on hiring prevention staff positions throughout the state. Patty would also like to work with the BLM on billboards. She put together a prevention page for the HTF website. She showed the Be Ember Aware brochure and DVD.

Ruta stated that she nominated Ed Smith and Sonya Sistare for a gold Smokey Bear award. They each received a bronze Smokey Bear award because technically the Living With Fire program is not a fire prevention program. BLM continues to support the Living With Fire program, the WUI Summit, Wildfire Awareness Week and the Nevada Fire Safe Council.

Patty stated her concern with how old the prevention materials for school children are. Loren agreed to take her concern to the FS national meeting in February, 2010. Loren also stated that he plans to get involved with the Ad Council.

Ruta stated that the fire restrictions are now posted on each geographic area's coordination center website. The websites are all standardized. She would like each of us to work with our respective centers to post restriction information. She would also like to see them develop a point and click feature for an interactive map.

Utah

Susan stated that Prevention Plans for all their field offices are due in December, 2009. She said all the districts have prevention people except for Moab. The Mitigation & Education Specialist position there is still vacant. Utah has monthly conference calls with all the BLM people. All of their activities are interagency. Tyre stated that the state of Utah produced a magazine and a tri-fold pamphlet in large

quantity. They produced 2,000 DVDs and have 1,000 more on order. If interested contact Tyre. The products are also available on line.

Utah's Interagency Communication Committee has undertaken several projects under the theme "Stop It Before It Starts." The Mill Flat fire in southern Utah burned 5 ½ weeks before it escaped. A billboard was visible right in front of the fire that said "Stop it before it starts". The public saw this as a conflicting message. There are 10 similar billboards throughout the state. Will the same theme be used next year? The theme will be kept except that it may not be used for billboards. Tyre also stated that the Forest Service purchased 55,000 litter bags; one side was a campfire message and the other was "Stop it before it starts". They are available through Tyre and Loren. He also tried to produce a license holder for hunting and fishing licenses. These holders have room on them for a vendor's name. However, the State of Utah didn't have money to make the holder this year. We are trying for next year.

Debris burning in Utah always requires a permit. Prevention materials can be handed out with the burn permits. The Committee also produced a poster with 1024 dpi quality. The photo is suitable to be enlarged with little loss of quality. The Committee also has a campaign specifically for shooters; the message can be placed on license holders, metal objects, etc. The Committee is also developing a vehicle campaign; there are 5 points on the artwork that point to various areas on the vehicle that could start a fire (catalytic converter, exhaust system, etc.). They also have a campfire campaign, campfire ABC which means "A shovel, Bucket, and Campfire".

Tyre stated that the WUI code will be updated this year. It will mesh in with structure building codes.

The Toolbox subcommittee (under the Interagency Communication Committee) already has a website they link to. The Communications committee is working on what jargon they will use to identify fires; Rx fire vs. controlled burn. The Social Media subcommittee is investigating the use of various social media tools.

Utah's Living With Fire people are burning out. Tyre needs position descriptions for the director position. The main purpose of the director will be to keep the public on task and gathering funds. They need at least one paid position to keep the organization viable.

Idaho needs copies of bylaws from fire safe council organizations. Please send them to Jon Skinner and Harry Steele.

The Great Basin Fire Prevention Conference will start on April 12, 2010 and be held at the Radisson Downtown in SLC. This location is one block from the Gateway. Trax is free in the downtown zone. A shuttle or public transportation is available from the airport to the hotel. The hotel has free parking. The theme being considered is "Fueling Prevention". There will be a \$75 sign up fee. This fee covers the cost of breaks, the luncheon, keynote speaker, and give away items. Vendors will be invited. The conference will be 3 days long. The target audience is agency prevention people and highly urbanized fire department personnel who operate in the WUI. The state of Utah will be handling finances. Many city fire departments have shown interest in attending the conference.

Topics for consideration are as follows:

Day 1

WUI Codes

Plants & Landscaping

New prevention campaigns

Prevention & Social Networking

Starting a Prevention Program from Scratch
Setting up a Wildland Investigation Program
Reaching out to younger audiences

Day 2

Generating Interest when there's no fire in the backyard
Using media attention to your advantage
Communication techniques with homeowners
Firewise your neighborhood
Boise Fire Department Experience
Homeowner Experience Panel

Day 3

Who does what for home owners
Insurance policies

There will be 45 minute breakout sessions and attendees will choose 2 out of 3 sessions. The Ogden FD will perform Boots & Bunkers, a skit for school kids on fire safety.

The group spent some time providing suggestions regarding the fire prevention conference and identified possible topic presenters and speakers.
After this discussion our meeting adjourned for the day.

November 13

Region Prevention Strategy 2010 Campaign

We already have "You Don't Have to Live in a Forest to be in a wildfire" and "Be Ember Aware". People living in a city do not realize they are in a WUI environment. We could get some universal photos and adapt these campaigns to be used region wide. We could modify Harry's billboard and poster and Nevada's Be Ember Aware billboards. We will work with Harry's ad agency to modify her products. Ruta will talk with Sonya about modifying Nevada's billboard. We need before and after photos of the same home unburned and then burned. Some of Harry's products could also be adapted for school aged children.

1) Look for artwork to be used on these regional products.

Tyre stated that Utah will be using Harry's poster and will also use the artwork on seed packets.

2) Work with Harry to adapt her billboard and poster for the region.

Right now Harry does not have a brochure and probably won't in the near future. Utah's cost for billboards was \$8,000 for the set up fee and \$10,000 for rent.

Helene has the information on a possible price break for regional billboards. Loren will ask Helene about this. Harry has the poster posted on Idaho's website. Harry will work with the ad agency on a horizontal placement of the existing artwork on a horizontally oriented poster.

Loren agreed to bring up the concern from Reid Shelley about how outdated the messages are on the Unicom signs. He will talk to Helene at the national meeting. Ruta will check with FS Region 6 to see if anyone is involved in this issue. Someone from Prineville used to head this up but the person retired.

Reno WUI Summit

The Summit is geared toward home owners. Utah would like to hold one. Can it be done in other states? Yes, New Mexico is holding one early next year. Ruta will send this information to the committee.

Firewise Communities New Focus

Firewise is working on some recognition and awards for communities that are doing good work but are not full blown Firewise Communities. Tyre said that the state of Utah is using Title 3 funds to award money for roof replacements, siding, etc. as long as the work is identified in their prevention plan. Harry also stated that Title 3 funds are being used in Idaho. There was some discussion regarding exactly how these funds could be used. It seems different states may be interpreting this differently. The Nevada Fire Safe Council was pursuing changes in the legislation from "Firewise" to "Firewise or a similar organization".

Stimulus Funding

Loren said that the FS received \$10 million. He explained how much money each state received and what kinds of projects were funded. Idaho, Utah and Nevada all received funding. It came in 3 phases. The 4th round is for projects that can be awarded within 30 days. \$10 million was designated for hazardous fuels restoration projects. This is part of the regular appropriations language for projects that are equal to or more than 50,000 acres in size. The projects would have to be in the late planning stages to fall in this category. Each region is limited to submitting 2 projects.

Fire Prevention Teams

Loren has a copy of the paper Dean wrote. Dean is retiring in December. Right now the team leaders for the Great Basin include Dean Burnham and Wayne Monger. Wayne is retired and works as an AD. The teams are composed of 2 identified people who are on call and 2 alternates. We need to get the list of potential team members from Dean.

- 1) We need to send out a request for Team Leaders.
- 2) Allow the Team Leader to select the Team Members.
- 3) We need to develop an application form based on the IMT form.

Loren will prepare the letter for the Great Basin Coordinating Group (GBCG) signature. Rex agreed to put the letter on GBCG letterhead and get the letter signed. Loren said he will have the cover letter and application form ready by the week of Thanksgiving. Applications will be due January 4, 2010. We will have a conference call on Thursday, January 21, 2010 at 1300 mst. to discuss the applications. The rotations are two per year. This year our rotation was March and June. The rotation schedule was published in the national mob guide. If we use AD Team Leaders we need to send agency people with them. We also need to recruit 13/13's as they will be in non-pay status and may not be aware of the application period.

It was pointed out that we need to modify our fire suppression agreements to include fire prevention. Otherwise we may have no authority to pay state employees who participate on fire prevention team assignments. Both Idaho and Utah have people who are qualified and wish to participate. The state of Nevada has no one.

Need for New Committee Members

As was stated at the beginning of our meeting, we need to recruit some new members for our committee. We need representatives from the following:

State of Nevada

Wyoming--someone from the BTF. (We need to check with Dean to see if Angie can replace him).

Idaho--Forest Service

FWS--Tyre agreed to check into this

BIA

Rex agreed to bring this up at the next GBCG meeting the week of November 14.

Our next meeting

We will have a conference call on February 16, 2010 at 1400 mst. to discuss billboards, brochures, our regional prevention campaign, etc.

We will have a face-to-face meeting immediately after the conclusion of the Great Basin Prevention Conference in SLC. The meeting will start on Thursday, April 15 at 1300 and run through Friday, April 16 at 1200.

Note taker: Ruta Glinski